

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG, MILI

SUBJECT: ANGOLA AND ZAIRE SECURITY

REF: (A) KINSHASA 91 (B) KINSHASA 420

1. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND OTHER TOP CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERS, WE HAVE NOTICED AN INCREASING EMPHASIS ON ZAIRE'S OWN SECURITY NEEDS. THIS EMPHASIS HAS BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED AS REPORTS PERSIST OF CONTINUED SOVIET MILITARY BUILD-UP IN NEIGHBORING ANGOLA, CABINDA AND CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE AND AS MPLA/CUBAN FORCES PURSUE THEIR ADVANCE IN NORTHERN ANGOLA TOWARD ZAIRE'S BORDERS. THIS TREND HAS MANIFESTED ITSELF MOST RECENTLY IN RENEWED PLEAS FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE AND MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL US GUARANTEE OF ZAIRE'S SECURITY IN THE FACE OF WHAT HE VIEWS AS THE GROWING SOVIET THREAT (REF A).

2. WE BELIEVE THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPORTANT FACTORS UNDERLYING MOBUTU'S RENEWED EMPHASIS ON ZAIRE'S SECURITY. WHILE IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY THE IDEA OF AN ATTACK ON ZAIRE BY MPLA/CUBAN FORCES EQUIPPED WITH SOVIET ARMS, THIS DOES NOT ALTER MOBUTU'S OWN PERCEPTION OF THE THREAT AS HE RECEIVES REPEATED REPORTS OF RUSSIAN TANKS, PLANES AND OTHER SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT POURING INTO AREAS BOTH SOUTH AND NORTH OF HIS

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NARROW OUTLET TO THE SEA, ALONG HIS SOUTHERN BORDERS

WHERE ARE LOCATED SOME OF ZAIRE'S KEY INDUSTRIAL SITES, AND JUST ACROSS THE RIVER FROM HIS CAPITAL. THEN HE LOOKS AT HIS OWN LIMITED MILITARY CAPABILITIES: VIRTUALLY NO AIR OR COASTAL DEFENSE AND A POORLY TRAINED ARMY, EQUIPPED WITH A HODGE-PODGE OF ARMS FROM A DOZEN DIFFERENT SOURCES WITH LITTLE IN THE WAY OF MOBILITY AND HEAVY ARMOR AND ARTILLERY. THE CONTRAST HE SEES IS LARGE, AND IT WILL GROW EVEN LARGER IF THE WIDELY-RUMORED MIGS IN FACT APPEAR IN ANGOLA AND CONGO.

3. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IS MOBUTU'S PROJECTION OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN ANGOLA. SO LONG AS HE COULD COUNT ON US AND SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT THERE SEEMED TO BE GOOD PROSPECTS FOR MAINTAINING AT LEAST A STALEMATE ON THE GROUND. BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE DECEMBER 17 SENATE VOTE HAS CREATED THE MOST SERIOUS DOUBTS IN MOBUTU'S MIND AS TO WHETHER HE CAN LOOK TO US IN THE FUTURE FOR THE KIND OF ASSISTANCE THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO MATCH THAT OF THE SOVIETS. THERE IS LIKEWISE GREAT UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL STAY IN MUCH LONGER. WHILE MOBUTU REMAINS HOPEFUL THAT WAYS CAN BE FOUND TO KEEP BOTH THE US AND SOUTH AFRICA INVOLVED, HE OBVIOUSLY MUST PLAN FOR THE WORST AND TAKE STEPS NOW TO SAFEGUARD HIS OWN SECURITY IN THE EVENT ANGOLA EVENTUALLY FALLS UNDER THE MPLA/SOVIET YOKE.

4. THERE ARE ALSO POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH MOBUTU MUST CONSIDER. HIS ABILITY TO COMMIT MUCH OF HIS OWN RESOURCES TO HELPING FNLA/UNITA IS SEVERELY LIMITED BY ZAIRE'S DESPERATE FINANCIAL SITUATION. ALREADY THERE IS QUESTIONING IN DOMESTIC CIRCLES, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE EDUCATED, AS TO WHETHER ZAIRE SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN ANGOLA WHEN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AT HOME ARE SO SERIOUS. MEANWHILE, MOBUTU MUST KEEP A SHARP EYE ON ANGOLA'S IMPACT ON HIS OWN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT: BESIDES HAVING A SOBERING EFFECT ON MOBUTU AND ANY PLANS HE MIGHT HAVE FOR USING HIS OWN TROOPS TO BOLSTER THE NORTHERN FRONT, FAZ'S REVERSES AND GENERALLY DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE TO DATE IN ANGOLA COULD ALSO HAVE THE EFFECT OF CREATING UNREST AMONG MILITARY ELEMENTS ON WHICH MOBUTU MUST COUNT FOR HIS

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CONTINUED RULE. MOBUTU MAY BELIEVE THAT SUCH DISCONTENT CAN BE BLUNTED BY SHIFTING THE FOCUS TO THE SOVIET/CUBAN THREAT TO ZAIRE ITSELF AND TO HIS EFFORTS TO MEET THIS THREAT BY BUILDING UP ZAIRE'S DEFENSES.

"SAVING ANGOLA."

5. I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT MOBUTU IS GIVING UP IN ANGOLA, OR IS EVEN PREPARING TO DO SO. OBVIOUSLY

THE BEST GUARANTY FOR HIS OWN SECURITY IS A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME THERE, AND I BELIEVE HE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK HARD TOWARD THAT END SO LONG AS THERE IS HOPE FOR SUCCESS. BUT, FOR THE REASONS SUGGESTED ABOVE, UNLESS AND UNTIL SUCH AN OUTCOME IS ACHIEVED I BELIEVE WE CAN ANTICIPATE INCREASING EFFORTS BY MOBUTU TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN MILITARY CAPABILITY; AND THE MAJOR THRUST OF THESE EFFORTS WILL BE IN OUR DIRECTION.

6. IN TURNING TO US FOR HELP, MOBUTU IN EFFECT IS SAYING THAT IF WE MUST STOP OUR HELP IN ANGOLA, THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS HELP THE COUNTRY WHICH IS LEFT WITH THE MAJOR BURDEN OF CARRYING ON THE FIGHT AND WHICH IN DOING SO IS INCURRING SERIOUS RISKS TO ITS OWN SECURITY. MOREOVER, ZAIRE'S OPTIONS FOR HELP FROM OTHER SOURCES ARE LIMITED: IT CAN COUNT ON ONLY MINIMAL ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER WESTERN SOURCES (E.G., FRANCE); THE MAJOR POTENTIAL COMMUNIST SUPPLIER, THE USSR, IS SQUARELY IN THE OPPONENTS' CAMP; AND THE CHINESE--FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST--ARE COVERING THEIR BETS BY NOT HELPING ANY OF THE ANGOLAN FACTIONS AND THIS PRESUMABLY INHIBITS THEIR COMING TO ZAIRE'S RESCUE AS WELL.

7. HOW WE RESPOND TO ZAIRE'S REQUESTS HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH OUR RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE AND OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES IN ANGOLA AND ELSEWHERE IN CENTRAL AFRICA. THERE ARE OBVIOUS LIMITATIONS ON OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND. GRANT AID ENDED SEVERAL YEARS AGO. WE HAVE ALREADY INCREASED OUR FMS CREDITS FROM \$3.5 MILLION IN FY 75 TO \$19 MILLION IN FY 76; CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL WILL BE NEEDED TO CONTINUE, OR, AS CURRENTLY PROJECTED, TO INCREASE THIS LEVEL OF CREDITS NEXT YEAR. IT IS PERHAPS IN RECOGNITION OF THESE LIMITATIONS THAT IN OUR LATEST DISCUSSIONS ON SECURITY MOBUTU SHIFTED FROM THE "SHOPPING LIST" APPROACH TO THE MORE GENERAL CONCEPT OF
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A US "GUARANTY" OF ZAIRE'S SECURITY. THE IDEA OF SUCH A GUARANTY OR GIVING ANY KIND OF ASSURANCES THAT WE WOULD REACT IN CASE OF ATTACK IS OF COURSE LOADED WITH TROUBLESOME POLICY IMPLICATIONS, AND IN OUR TALK I WAS CAREFUL NOT TO ENCOURAGE MOBUTU TO THINK ALONG THESE LINES. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE MOBUTU SERIOUSLY WANTS TO DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT HE CAN RELY UPON US IN THE SECURITY FIELD BEFORE HE SEEKS TO OPEN OTHER OPTIONS NOW CLOSED. ONE OF THESE IS EVENTUALLY ACCEPTING SOME SORT OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SOVIETS. IF THIS SHOULD DEVELOP, MOBUTU'S ABILITY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE SOVIETS IN WORKING OUT AN ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD BOTH PROTECT HIS INTERESTS AND PRESERVE OUR OWN COULD DEPEND IN CONSIDERABLE MEASURE ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH HE FELT HE COULD COUNT ON OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

8. UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT WE HAVE A CLEARER VIEW OF HOW
THE ANGOLAN SITUATION MAY EVOLVE AND WHAT OUR OWN ABILITY
TO INFLUENCE IT MAY BE, I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
WE ENCOURAGE ZAIRE TO CONTINUE PLAYING AS ACTIVE A ROLE
AS POSSIBLE. THIS, IN TURN, REQUIRES OUR MAINTAINING
ZAIRE'S CONFIDENCE. TO THIS END, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD
SEEK TANGIBLE WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN FOR ZAIRE'S
SECURITY, BE IT THROUGH SUPPORT IN THE UN SECURITY
COUNCIL OR BY AGREEING TO RECEIVE MOBUTU'S EMISSARY FOR
DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON. THERE MAY BE OTHER WAYS AS
WELL. THE POINT IS THAT MOBUTU IS NOW TESTING OUR RESOLVE,
AND HOW WE REACT WILL HAVE A LOT TO DO WITH HOW HE
PROCEEDS IN THE DAYS AHEAD. CUTLER

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